

M E S S E N G E R S

For Katherine, a grieving mother, a business trip overseas turns into a sequence of mysterious events.

INT. OFFICE - PENNSYLVANIA -- DAY

We are close on a PHOTO of a YOUNG BOY. An innocent smile shows his pearly whites. As a TEARDROP collides, splashing onto the surface of the photo, we FLASHBACK to...

A TENSE SCENE AT THE HOSPITAL

BEEPING MACHINES. RAISED VOICES. PHYSICIANS SCRAMBLING. Amid this chaotic blur is the BOY, critically injured. Breathing through a ventilator. Refusing to release the KITE SPOOL in his hand.

CARL (PRE-LAP)  
I can come back...

BACK AT THE OFFICE

... **CARL**(40's), a man in business attire, stands framed in the doorway. **KATHERINE**(30's), the woman from which the teardrop originated puts the photo away and wipes her red, swollen eyes with the back of her hands.

KATHERINE  
No, no it's okay. You're fine.

CARL  
You sure?

KATHERINE  
Carl...

Carl eases his way into the office, hands over a CONTRACT.

CARL  
Mr. Jui wants to reconsider.

KATHERINE  
You're kidding?

Katherine, a bit taken aback, glimpses over the contract.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)  
Why the sudden change of heart?

CARL  
He didn't say. Though he did mention he would like to meet with you, tomorrow. In Beijing.  
(off Katherine's surprise)  
Which is why I felt it necessary to bring Margaret up to speed on the particulars. We're gonna send her.

KATHERINE

What? You and I both know she'll  
jeopardize the entire contract.

Carl emits a hard breath, puts his hands in his pockets.  
Katherine sets down the contract, folds her arms.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

I appreciate your concern. But, I'm  
fine, really. I may not look it,  
but I am. Mr. Jui asked for me. I  
should be there.

Carl mulls over the idea for a moment.

CARL

Alright. Get your things in order.  
You're on the first flight out  
tonight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - "FENGZHENG HOTEL"- BEIJING -- MIDDAY

Katherine towel dries her wet hair while gazing out her room  
window. From this high up, the view of the massive city down  
below is breathtaking.

A knock is heard at the door. Katherine pauses, glances over  
her shoulder.

AS THE ROOM DOOR OPENS

we see a Chinese **BELL HOP**. College-aged. Standing in the hall  
with his head down. He holds an **ORNATE BOX** with both hands.

BELL HOP

Miss Watson?

KATHERINE

Yes.

BELL HOP

This was left for you.

The bell hop holds out the **BOX**. Katherine looks mystified.

KATHERINE

Did they say who it was from?

The bell hop gives a deferential bow and walks off. Katherine  
pokes her head out into the hall, but to her surprise, the  
bell hop is nowhere to be found.

THE ROOM DOOR CLOSES

Katherine carries the BOX over to the bed where she stares at it studiously before making a call.

INT. BEDROOM - PENNSYLVANIA, USA -- NIGHT

A vibrating cellphone glows in the dark.

Asleep in bed, **GEORGE** (37), rolls over, switches on a LAMP atop a bedside night stand and blindly feels for his phone. We notice a FRAMED PICTURE of the same little boy as he takes the call.

GEORGE

Hello?

We INTERCUT between Katherine and a groggy George.

KATHERINE

George?

GEORGE

Katherine? It's 3 in the morning.  
Is everything alright?

KATHERINE

Yeah. Yeah, everything's fine.  
Sorry. I just... Something strange  
just happened. A few minutes ago a  
bellhop came by my room with a box.

GEORGE

Yeah? And?

KATHERINE

And when I asked who it was from,  
he didn't say anything. He just  
walked off.

GEORGE

Did you open it?

KATHERINE

No. Should I?

GEORGE

I would. I mean how else are you  
gonna find out what's inside?

Katherine cradles the phone between her shoulder and ear. With caution she lifts the LID off the box, peeks inside.

Katherine pauses. Her jaw begins to drop and her face twists into a grimace disturbed by what lies inside.

FADE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - BEIJING TOWER -- SAME DAY

Katherine reaches across a wide conference table and shakes hands with **MR. JUI**, a well dressed Chinese man. As the two trade smiles, a slender **CHINESE WOMAN** enters, carrying a large CANVAS PORTFOLIO. The woman hands the portfolio over to Mr. Jui, bows and removes the contracts from the table.

MR. JUI

Ms. Watson, because you have traveled so many miles, I'd like to present you with this gift.

Mr. Jui holds out the portfolio with both hands. Katherine is reluctant to accept.

KATHERINE

No, Mr. Jui. You shouldn't have.

MR. JUI

I was told to. Which is why you must accept. Please, if you would.

Katherine sighs, smiles and ultimately accepts.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

Mr. Jui and Katherine both stand to their feet. Bows are exchanged. Katherine gathers her belongings, walks to the door when Mr. Jui calls out...

MR. JUI

Miss Watson...

(off Katherine looking back)

Were you at all surprised by the contents of the box? I ask because it originated here.

Off the airy sounds of an energetic city, we CUT TO:

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF BEIJING CITY -- NIGHT

The night skyline is a fine spectacle of lights...

EXT. HOTEL SUITE - "FENGZHENG HOTEL" -- CONTINUOUS

... playing off the WINDOW Katherine stands before.

INT. HOTEL SUITE -- CONTINUOUS

Katherine backs away from the window. Walks over to her bed where a SPOOL and a FLAT-KITE rest. Katherine pores over the items with her arms crossed. Ghostly echoes of CHILDLIKE LAUGHTER fills the air as we CUT TO:

GHOSTLY VOICE (PRE-LAP)

*Mommy...*

EXT. PARK AT THE EDGE OF THE CITY -- NEXT MORNING

Katherine sits amid a GRASS FIELD. Her hair flutters in the gentle breeze as she ponders over the KITE ITEMS laid out before her. She sighs, unsure where to begin.

GHOSTLY VOICE (O.S.)

*Don't worry mommy. The hardest part's done. I'm already dead.*

Katherine's EYES WIDEN. She looks back over her shoulder. Standing several feet away, under a Weeping Willow - FLASHING IN AND OUT LIKE A GLITCHY HOLOGRAM - is the YOUNG BOY from the photo.

KATHERINE

Jacob? Jacob, is that you?

Jacob nods his head yes and runs to his mother. Katherine opens her arms, deeply yearning to embrace her son once again, but sadly he runs right through her. This tears Katherine apart. She weeps inconsolably. Tears of black mascara cascade down her cheeks as Jacob focuses all his attention on assembling the kite. Not before long, Jacob finishes and holds up the kite.

JACOB

See. Easy. Wanna see how it flies?

Katherine wipes the tears from her eyes and nods her head yes. She stands to her feet. Jacob spools off some line.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Did ya bring the picture?

KATHERINE

The what?

JACOB

The picture. Of me. We need it!

With haste, Katherine pulls the PHOTO from her bag. Hands it to Jacob who uses chewing gum to attach it to the kite.

KATHERINE

Sweetie, what are you doing?

Jacob passes the KITE over to his mother.

JACOB

Here. You fly it. Now mommy, when the kite is high up in the sky like a bird, make sure you cut the string. It's very very important you cut the string. Okay, mommy?

KATHERINE

Why Jacob? Why cut the string?

JACOB

To let me go.

KATHERINE

What? No! Never! I won't ever let you go. Ever.

JACOB

But you must mommy. You have to. Please! You can't keep holding on to me. You gotta let my kite go. Okay? It's gonna be okay mommy.  
(voice echoing...)

Jacob DISSIPATES into thin air. Disappearing as mysteriously as he appeared. It takes a minute for all this to settle. Finally it does. Katherine is brought to her knees, falling hard. Despite the ubiquity of air, Katherine struggles to breathe. Her chest tightens. She coughs, but nothing comes up. Passerby's must think she's insane. Eventually Katherine's breathing levels out. But now her emotions spill over like a cup that's been filled with too much milk. Katherine lowers her head, weeps uncontrollably.

KATHERINE

(sotto voce)

Oh God. God why? Why did you have to take my Jacob... He was my son. My sweet little boy. What am I supposed to do now God...

(buries face into the grass)

What am I supposed to do now...

GHOSTLY VOICE (O.S.)

*Cut the string mommy. Look. Look up mommy. Look up into the sky.*

Katherine sniffs her runny nose as she slowly raises her head up to the sky where she beholds...

LOOKING UP INTO THE SKY

... thousands upon thousands of floating KITES. All shapes, colors and sizes. EVERY SINGLE ONE UNDULATING FREELY WITHOUT STRINGS ATTACHED.

THE END.